

**Whitewater Township Board
Minutes of Special Meeting held December 15, 2020**

Call to Order

Supervisor Popp called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. at the Whitewater Township Hall, 5777 Vinton Road, Williamsburg, Michigan.

Roll Call of Board Members

Board Members present in person: Treasurer Benak, Clerk Goss, Trustee Hubbell

Board Members present via Zoom: Trustee Vollmuth, Popp

Board Members absent: None

Others present in person: None

Others present via Zoom: Grand Traverse County Road Commission staff Wayne Schoonover and Rob Sullivan, approximately 42 others

Set/Adjust Meeting Agenda

There were no adjustments.

Declaration of Conflict of Interest

None

Public Comment (7:25)

The following Zoom participants made public comment:

John King, 9160 Skegemog Point Road, spoke of three features he is not in favor of: tree removal, the prominent drainage ditches, and the centerline revisions.

Glen Peterson, 8938 Skegemog Point Road, said he would hate to lose the canopy of trees and is in favor of reducing the speed limit at Samels farm to 25-35 miles an hour.

Gary Cramer, 8666 Skegemog Point Road, said he hates to lose the tree canopy, thinks the speed should be reduced, previous chip seal was done with the wrong rocks; asked if they make ditches on side of road 10 foot, what is going to happen with the mailboxes.

David Karmon, 8938 Skegemog Point Road, would like to maintain the canopy and reduce the speed limit.

Mark Taylor, 8057 Skegemog Point Road, said numerous residents are pushing back on the canopy of trees, ditches, and tax assessment; would like to investigate the speed limit; relayed his contact with Ron Rohloff regarding speed reduction process; would like to know process for funding of this improvement via grants and Pure Michigan monies.

Cliff Pixler, 9294 Skegemog Point Road, said his concern is the northernmost 1.2 miles; cited benefits of enhanced structural integrity and longevity, increased safety of drivers; cited negatives of higher short-term cost, destruction of trees, speeds will increase, increased potential

for accidents. Asked if county will provide engineering costs, design, maintain, and provide construction observation even if the road is not designed to county road standards.

Karen Petersen, 8691 Skegemog Point Road, spoke of road being repaired once; road is in need of repair but is confused regarding the extent to which county and township want to do it; would like to just grade off the top and put a fresh coat on; doesn't understand why they have to go 10 feet on either side; road is very dilapidated and hazardous under the canopy of trees; said expense of residents and destruction of nature is not something she is in favor of.

Bob Campbell, 8886 Skegemog Point Road, said no one denies the need for major repairs, especially to last mile, and significant repairs to first two miles; wonders whether county would need to go to extent they are proposing if the speed limit was 25 mph instead of 55 mph; suggested vigorously and aggressively pursuing a speed limit reduction from the end of the farm to the northern extreme, perhaps by petition; would like to get a revised proposal from the road commission that would not do what the current proposal does to the canopy of trees.

Baiba Jensen, 8938 Skegemog Point Road, agreed with whoever has already spoken; her family has been part of Skegemog Point Road for over 50 years; haven't had anybody at low rate of speed crash into a tree; need to lower the speed limit; this is a local road that needs to be preserved for its beauty.

Chris Modrack, 8938 Skegemog Point Road, agreed with what has been said before; Campbell's idea to pursue changing the speed limit at end of point would make the most sense, to see if it is a viable alternative. She is part of Rice's resort, 10 families, rich ethic of preservation; it is a dead-end road; beauty of the canopy is amazing, wildlife protection.

Felicia Schulte, 8715 Skegemog Point, would like to see the canopy maintained and speed limit dropped all the way.

Jerry Blight, 8715 Skegemog Point Road, said if dropped speed limit is not enforced with sanctions, it is not going to do any good.

Richard Gold, 8541 Skegemog Point Road, said he agrees with what other folks have said; no discussion as to why the ramp down to the water has not been included. People who will wreak the most havoc on the southern two miles is the Elmer's pit with heaviest loads and highest traffic, an issue when it comes time to talk about who pays for this. If we have special assessment district, how does one get speed bumps.

Greta Dart, 8938 Skegemog Point Road, said she has been going to Rice's since about 1947. The thought of losing canopy is devastating to her; should try every avenue to maintain the trees.

Jill Kuznicki, 9139 Skegemog Point Road, said she supports everything that has been said; propane driver told her the road is the most dangerous in the county because it is so narrow. Having it widened to the point that it should be might help; need to look at another option for the final mile.

Marianne Varley (buzzing and feedback)

Audrey Thomas, 9036 Skegemog Point Road, said she is on the north end, would like to see a slower speed limit and keep it narrow, the way it is, with a 5-foot gravel shoulder; raise the part that is low, chop it up and regrade it, crown the part that is low and crumbling and just repave it and leave the trees as they are, and put a slower speed limit.

Dave Hauser, 9240 Skegemog Point Road, said he has voiced his concerns in letters to Popp; supports a downscaled approach to the northern mile to preserve as many of the trees as possible and coming up with a way to pave parts of it. Most of the roughness is because of peeling off of skim coat done 15 or 16 years ago. In many parts of northern mile, pavement appears to be sound and could be paved over and be good for many years. He spoke of the rough surface of the northern mile and safety factors, distracted drivers, people falling/tripping, falling off bicycles, peaks of hills are dangerous, trucks straddling the centerline. Would like to try to find a way to compromise and protect as many of the trees as possible and improve pavement.

Katherine Lawrence, 9019 Skegemog Point Road, said she is in agreement with just about everybody; would be nice to have some improvements on the road; don't need 11 feet on either side and lose trees; a simpler repair would be good. Concerned about speeds, not in favor of improving launch at end of road.

Leslie Modrack, 8938 Skegemog Point Road, said she agrees with what everyone has said; we highly value conservation in our area; it is important to fix the road. She is interested to hear how this proposal came forward, widening the street 22 feet. It concerns her that there is any proposal to remove any trees, but fixing the road is critical. Maintaining conservation views and valuing safety, she thinks we can come to some kind of middle ground without compromising the trees.

Sue McCraven, 9435 Fairview Road, said she is on the dirt road at the northern extension of Skegemog Point Road. She supports what her neighbors say and is always concerned about saving trees, especially after the storm of 2015.

Marianne Varley, 9438 Fairview Road, posed a question to Chris Modrack about a nature preserve for the canopy of trees.

Chris responded.

Larry Varley, 9438 Fairview Road, said his family has been in this area for over 60+ years. To see the canopy being destroyed would be devastating. He spoke of improvements to Baggs Road and devastation. Spoke of beauty of northern mile, sand removal at Elmer's. Does not agree with speed bumps, concern for boat trailers, doesn't know how weight limits would be regulated. Agree about asphalt being fixed, but removing the canopy of trees even a slight amount would be devastating. Resurface it; leave the trees alone.

Ron Beitel, 8900 Skegemog Point Road, said Popp told him four or five years ago the road couldn't be fixed because of the water table on the north end; he needs to know what has

changed from that and why that hasn't been brought up in this whole process. Asked if there is a calculation that the county and the township come up with; if it goes forward, is there a way to ask the county for more. Has owned a lot of homes; has never had anybody say I need you to pay for a road to get repaired. Trying to get some more answers.

Michael Kadian, 9035 Skegemog Point Road, said instead of a SAD based on parcel, can we do it based on amount of frontage on the road; thinks that will be an equal and fair assessment for everyone. Those with more frontage would pay more; those with less would pay less. Agrees that Elmer's would probably have to foot more of the bill since they are tearing up the road more and have more frontage. Proposed two speed limits, one on first couple miles and one in canopy area. Agrees with not getting rid of the canopy of trees but does like the idea of widening the road because it is narrow and not safe. Isn't sure he is for speed bumps or weight limits; always going to be big trucks. All for redoing it, but do it by frontage instead of by parcel.

Pat Laramie, 8580 Skegemog Point Road, said she would be an advocate for proceeding as soon as possible with requesting speed limits be set; would like to see a 25 mph speed limit for the north one mile because of narrowness, canopy, lack of visibility, and perhaps 40 mph for the first two miles. If we get another petition going and get a majority of signatures to approach the state police, she is more than happy to take that on. She is also for preserving the integrity of the north one mile. Would like to see some sort of compromise to rebuild road to where it will last a number of years, including establishing a drainage situation in the one low section of the road. She is not an advocate for speed bumps or on imposing a weight restriction for trucks.

Jan Becker, 7919 Skegemog Point Road, said she is in agreement of most of what has been said tonight; not in favor of speed bumps; have not had any significant maintenance on road for 10+ years, maybe 20, including filling of potholes; needs to be good maintenance so we are not in this situation in another 10 or 20 years. In favor of limiting the number of trees to be taken out and excessive widening of the road; would be in favor of the speed limits, 25 mph in the last mile, maybe 45 on first two miles off 72. No mention made regarding how residents on Drake and both portions of Fairview would be affected.

Eva Lenzini, 8077 Skegemog Point Road, said reduced speed on north mile would be great. South two miles need speed limit lowered as well. In favor of reduced scope in north mile. Not in favor of any repair on south two miles. Reduced scope would mean the county will not be kicking in any money if we don't do it their way. Would it end up to be higher cost for all residents on special assessment if county does not put any money in? How do we know the improvement is guaranteed for the life of the assessment?

Joe Volk, 8516 Skegemog Point Road, said he supports all his neighbors' wishes; hopeful by lowering speed limit a positive resolution can be reached with road commission on narrowing the road.

Bob Reider, 9435 Fairview Road, said it is a safety issue on north end with all the potholes; likes the tree canopy and would support any type of speed limit.

Ed DeRoshia, 9305 Skegemog Point Road, said he has concerns with safety, would like to see reduced speed limit; mixed feelings about the ramp; there is no parking there; concerned about restoring the ramp. White pine on his road is over 240 years old; hopes trees such as those will be preserved.

Agenda Items as Listed in Special Meeting Notice (1:11:15)

Q&A Session on Skegemog Point Road Project

Wayne Schoonover and Rob Sullivan from the Grand Traverse County Road Commission are present via Zoom.

Popp posed questions: How can we accomplish what you want to accomplish? How do we pave over what we have with zero widening and ditching?

Schoonover proceeded to explain the existing condition of the southern two miles and the north one mile, as well as a detailed explanation of their proposed fixes. He also explained their policies for reconstruction.

He also explained the road commission does not have the legal authority to change speed limits. They will collect data and submit to state police for consideration. Ron Rohloff looked at the number of access points, and Schoonover believes he forwarded that on to the township. If the northern one mile would fit within the section that allows for a 45-mph speed zone, that would take a supporting resolution from the township for the road commission to take it to the MSP. Speed limits are set by Michigan law at 55 mph.

Speed bumps would not be permitted on a public road; very dangerous for snowplowing.

The road commission has a local match contribution policy. Local match of 75% is required on all local road improvements. Match for wedging and chip sealing is 40% on the southern two miles. Northern section would be at 75%, but reduces to 70% if shoulders are paved at the same time. Estimates were given with and without paved shoulders.

Regarding lifespan of the roadway, when it is a reconstruction, they look at that they will be able to get 20+ years out of that. If you incorporate preventive maintenance operations, crack sealing at 5 years out, chip sealing at 7-10 years, you are able to greatly expand the lifespan of newly constructed and reconstructed roadways. Roads that are not reconstructed, like the southern two miles, are more subject to underlying conditions that have been covered with asphalt; those are a lot harder to identify the lifespan. He explained their policies on post-reconstruction and post wedge and chip seal issues.

The road commission's estimate includes the cost of a 2-inch overlay at the access to the lake at the end of Skegemog Point Road for ease of turnaround of road commission equipment.

In answer to Goss's questions, Schoonover stated the following:

- He does not believe there are any road repair options that would maintain all of the tree canopy. They are looking to have a 10-foot clear zone from the edge of the travel way. They would start out with an 11-foot drive lane, plus a 5-foot shoulder, combination of

gravel and pavement, in order to provide multimodal shoulders and clear zones to AASHTO recommendations, and commented on considerations for ditch dimensions.

- He explained the consequences of not allowing water to drain off the road through lack of sunlight, ditching or paved shoulders, i.e., safety issue of water on the road, reduced lifespan.
- Addressing a concern as to how close the road commission's opinions of probable cost come to actual costs on projects as reflected by the bids, Schooner related that for two SADs which were ongoing in 2018, the bids were within 10% of the road commission estimates. He explained the process that would be followed if there was a decision to continue on. On their first shot, they try to be conservative.

Benak had no questions.

Vollmuth asked if they wanted to do portable speed bumps, would they have to fund them themselves.

Schoonover said they would not allow it.

In answer to Hubbell's question about the use of cement versus asphalt and longer life, Schoonover replied that concrete roadway upfront costs are probably 1.5 times more expensive. Lifespan depends on the type of traffic, the load of the traffic. They do last, but they are not maintenance free, and explained improvements in asphalt over the years.

Popp asked Schoonover to speak to how we might improve the driving surface while keeping 100% of the existing canopy.

Schoonover explained that in order to expend public dollars on this route, they do have to meet their standards and have to be addressing safety and drainage. If they forewent using public funds for a fix, then they would be looking at just repairs of what is there today, i.e., a 20-foot-wide road and 1 or 2 feet or, in some areas, virtually no shoulder area. That would basically get an asphalt cap over the existing. They would have to address adding gravel shoulders or something of that nature in order to prevent an edge drop off from the asphalt. That would be allowed under their permit process, or with the road commission overseeing that, that could happen. They would allow that as long as it was no less than what is there today.

Popp noted that option would not address any of the concerns on the last mile, but maybe the south two miles we could go with the proposed opinion of probable cost.

Schoonover agreed that is an option.

Popp asked Schoonover to talk about how the road commission might engineer, might write a specification, and might inspect the work done on that last mile if it were just a simple cap over.

Schoonover acknowledged that is a tough question, for the reason that the contractor can provide a good quality mix, which the road commission inspects. Contractor does quality control. Road commission does quality assurance. From that point on, because they are putting asphalt on an

uneven surface, the thickness of asphalt could vary from 2” to 3” or less. When rolling it, you cannot get uniform density across it. He said there is no way he can say that if you put a cap over the top of this, you are going to get 20 years. He feels fairly assured that you are not going to have anything major for 5 or 10 years but cannot guarantee the strength of the underlying materials. Their asset management policy would be that they would not participate and spend public dollars on a fix that is substandard.

There were several other questions from board members.

There was discussion about the possibility of coming up with an alternative to the existing opinion of probable cost, the alternative being a cap over of some type of the last mile, and potentially using the suggested fix for the south two miles.

By show of hands, Zoom participants indicated a desire to pursue that option.

Schoonover indicated they could proceed under the agreement without the payment of additional monies. If there is no change with the southern two miles, they would continue with that. The northern mile, they would probably have more conversation to define exactly what the residents would like to see out there. They would make sure they are good with accepting that before they went further with any other redesign.

There were additional questions and comments from Skegemog Point Road residents.

There was board consensus that the people on the north section of Skegemog Point Road would like the road commission to provide a hybrid opinion of probable cost dealing with a cap over on the north one mile and leave the south two miles as it is currently proposed.

Schoonover asked for clarification. With this hybrid and with doing a cap over that northern one mile, are we looking at just doing the cap over the existing 20-foot road width, or is there any consideration or thought of trying to provide a minimum paved shoulder width in addition. Not doing any widening of any existing shoulder, but if there are areas with existing shoulder, utilizing some of that and pave some of that.

Popp said he would encourage the residents to look at adding some pavement outside of the white line, especially if we did not have to remove any trees to do it. He thinks that would be consensus of this group; even if it cost more, it would provide a longer lasting road surface. Also, maybe we want to take a look at more than just 2 inches.

Hubbell said he would push for having the road crushed and reshaped and put back down, and most certainly extending the sides of the road, to get more longevity and bang for the buck.

Discussion followed.

Board Comments/Discussion (2:56:25)

None

Public Comment (2:56:35)

Four people spoke.

Adjournment (3:04:50)

Motion by Hubbell to adjourn; second by Vollmuth. Roll call vote: Benak, yes; Goss, yes; Hubbell, yes; Popp, yes; Vollmuth, yes. Meeting adjourned at 9:59 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl A. Goss
Whitewater Township Clerk